

**TOWN BUILDING AND LAND ACQUISITION COMMITTEE MEETING**

**September 22, 1970**

**6:15 P.M.**

**Present:** Joseph Stevens, Chairman  
Roger Hachek  
David Abbt, Clerk  
  
Paul Sydnist, Sebastian  
Paul Leary, Sebastian  
Thomas Barry, Fire Chief

Fire Chief Barry presented his proposals for solving problems of inadequate space, manpower and station location. In general, the first proposal involved closing the present Center Fire Station and building a new station further north on Main Street, large enough to house a ladder truck. It was proposed that this station be covered 24 hours.

His second proposal, more extensive than the first, would involve closing both South and Center Stations and building one large facility in the Kelley's Corner area and building a sub-station in North Acton.

The meeting adjourned at 10:15 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

David Abbt, Clerk

**TOWN OF ACTON**

**Inter-Departmental Communication**

DATE: October 6, 1970

FROM: Robert W. Dotson, Town Manager  
TO: Town Building-Land Acquisition Committee and Town Engineer  
SUBJECT: Proposed location for Fire Station

Attached is a copy of a report from the Fire Chief relative to a proposed site for a Fire Station. The Board of Selectmen requests comments and recommendations from the TBLAC relative to suitability of the site and from the Town Engineer relative to whether the site is located in lowland area which would not be suitable for construction.

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Rob W. Dotson', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Robert W. Dotson  
Town Manager

# TOWN OF ACTON

## Inter-Departmental Communication

DATE: September 25, 1970

FROM: Fire Chief

TO: Board of Selectmen

SUBJECT: Report of Meeting with Town building and Land Acquisition Committee

On Wednesday night, September 23, 1970, I met with the Town Building and Land Acquisition Committee and 2 members of the Board of Selectmen. At this time the future building need for the Fire Department was discussed in detail. Several possible plans for improving the Fire Protection in North Acton were presented and examined by all present. Factors brought out for discussion were; number of stations, location of stations, uses for "old" stations, type of stations, full time manpower required for manning, apparatus requirements and many other items that would have to be faced on an expansion program.

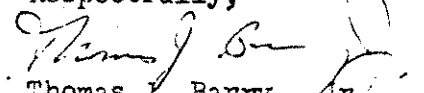
One of the main problems encountered was how to provide better fire protection for the North Acton area while still maintaining adequate protection in the Acton Center area. Agreement was reached that the best proposal would be the erection of a new station on Main Street between the Water District Property (Conant Well) and the Sunoco Station at Main Street and Great Road. The only additional apparatus requirement would be the purchase of an additional ladder truck to operate out of this station. This would provide an Engine Company as well as a Ladder Truck in the proposed station. Minimum manning would require 3 men on duty, 2 fire fighters and 1 Lieutenant. This would not be too far off our projected needs for manpower by the time the station is ready for occupancy. The purchase of a second ladder truck would enable us to provide ladder protection, which is badly needed on Great Road for the apartment buildings and still maintain ladder coverage in South and West Acton. There is the possibility that a used ladder truck could be purchased rather than a new one at this time. This I would strongly recommend as we are not too sure on the expected service life of our present ladder.

The site proposal has access to both Great Road and Main Street and consists of 2 parcels of land both owned by the same party and believed to be available. The frontage on both streets is a most desirable feature and may allow us to respond into either street. The site proposed has 2 features which will require further investigation. One question is if the land would be suitable for the station. Certain parts of the land are low and a brook does run through the area. The other problem is that there is a slight curve in the road at this point which would have a tendency to limit visibility. It could be that when the lot is cleared most of the visibility would be restored.

At the present time we have not drawn up requirements for the building, our activities have been directed to site location.

I definitely feel that a time table should be drawn up to insure operation by early 1973.

Respectfully,

  
Thomas J. Barry, Jr.  
Chief of Fire Department

TJB/bb

October 14, 1970

Dick Murphy-Conservation Commission and  
Janet Murphy-Recreation Commission

**CONSERVATION LAND PURCHASES:**

Dick Murphy met with the Committee to describe five land purchases the Conservation Commission plans to include on the March 1971 Town Meeting Warrant. They were:

1. The "Hollowell" lots between Wheeler Lane and Spring Hill Road. This is considered a reasonable addition to the present Conservation Land in this area.
2. The "Martin" lot in the same area, desirable for the same reasons.
3. A part ( $3\frac{1}{2}$  acres) of the "Plamondon Land" off Quarry Road. This will give the Conservation Commission the remainder of the shore line of Will's Hole.
4. The Land owned by S. Monsen (10 + acres) on Central Street near Richardson's Crossing. This land is mostly within the Flood Plain of Fort Pond Brook and is therefore consistent with the long range plan of the Conservation Commission.
5. The "Merriam" Land on School Street. This would be the first large Conservation-Recreation land purchase in the South Acton Village area.

A general discussion of the Conservation Commission's plans for the March 1971 Town Meeting followed, with the TBLAC indicating approval.

**SWIMMING FACILITY:**

Mr. Stevens reported that he had been unable to contact Mr. Cacciatore to discuss the availability of his 55.5 acres of land on Massachusetts Avenue. The possibility of this land being purchased by the Conservation Commission was discussed. This was considered a possibility but would require additional money for the Conservation Fund.

EXTENSION OF GARDNER FIELD:

Mr. Miller reported difficulty in contacting the lawyer in charge of this land. He felt he would have some progress to report at the next meeting.

TOWN BUILDING AND LAND ACQUISITION COMMITTEE MEETING

Page 2

FIRE STATIONS:

A discussion concerning the last meeting with the Fire Chief produced the following:

1. That the limitations of the present Center Fire Station (such as size, location etc.) be studied in more detail.
2. That the requests of the Selectmen received in a memo of October 6, 1970 from the Town Manager be complied with but the Selectmen be informed that TBLAC does not think that sufficient study of the situation has been done to make a final site selection.

GOWARD FIELD:

Mr. Huebsch reported that Mr. Collins was willing to sell a portion of his land for an extension of Goward Field. It was decided to prepare a study plan of the land in this area.

CONCLUSION:

A meeting was scheduled for October 21, 1970 at 8:00 P.M.  
The meeting adjourned at 10:15 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

*David Abbt*

David Abbt, Clerk

November 6, 1970

Anthony L. Galeota, Jr., Town Engineer

Robert W. Dotson, Town Manager

Proposed Location for Fire Station

The parcels mentioned in your memo of October 6th are approximately 90% in the Flood Plain, according to our contour maps.

November 19, 1970

David Abbt

Roger Heubsch, TBLAC

Fire Station Doors

The height of the doors at the South Fire Station is 12' and the height of the doors at the Center Fire Station is 10'. The height of the Ladder Truck is somewhere between 10 and 12 feet (I did not measure it.)

**TOWN OF ACTON**  
**Inter-Departmental Communication**

DATE: November 20, 1970

FROM: Fire Chief

TO: Town Building & Land Aquisition Committee

SUBJECT: Land For Station Relocation

In regards to our efforts to find a suitable piece of land for the proposed relocation of the Center Station and after receiving a memo from the Town Engineer that the area we were interested in was in the Flood Plain. I have further reviewed the land available in the area and have come up with the following conclusions.

I am afraid that the best choice available in this area would be a piece of the parcel of land owned by the Estate of Waldo P. Lapham on the west corner of the intersection of Main Street and Great Road. Other land that I looked at would require quite abit of work in site improvement and also would appear to fall in the Flood Plain, eliminating its desirability as a building site. In our original talk, I recall that this site at the intersection received favorable comment, but it was felt that the price would be higher than the other parcels that were under consideration and that we should investigate these other areas first.

Incidently, I also checked the property that was investigated by Mr. Galeota and found very little land on the plots that really could be used in constructing a station.

If you have any further questions on these recent developments, I would be glad to get together with your committee at any time.

Respectfully,

  
Thomas J. Barry, Jr.  
Chief of Fire Department

TJB/bb

cc: Town Manager  
Town Engineer



ACTON FIRE DEPARTMENT

SPECIAL REPORT

on

FIRE PROTECTION REQUIREMENTS

COMPILED FOR

TOWN BUILDING AND LAND ACQUISITION COMMITTEE

APRIL 8, 1971

## ACTON FIRE DEPARTMENT

## 1. Introduction

This report on the Fire Protection needs of the Acton Center Area is submitted as requested by the Town Building and Land Acquisition Committee. The report contains a survey of the growth in the area as well as an analysis of Fire Alarms, manpower response and time required to respond for the years 1965, 1969, 1970. Also contained in this report will be a summary of alternate methods that have been considered to improve the protection in this area as well as recommendations and an implementation schedule as suggested by the Fire Department. Source material for surveys and analysis were obtained from Fire Department, Building Inspector and Assessor's records. Specific sources of information will be stated in each area. The years 1965, 1969, 1970 were chosen for the following reasons. In 1965 the Department had completed 1 year of having paid men on duty days only, the State census showed the Town at 10,188 persons. The year of 1969 was the busiest in the Department history and the first year we had 24 hour coverage in the West Acton Station. Although in 1970 there was a drop in alarms, problems with manpower and increases in response time were very evident. The Federal Government census was 14,770, an increase of 4,582 persons in 5 years.

2. Growth of the Acton Center area since 1965

Data Source: Building Permits, Planning Board records on subdivision and Streets accepted at Town Meetings 1965-1970.

New Streets	39	
New Residential Dwelling	392*	
New Industrial Building	9	
New Commercial Building	11	
Other Buildings not classified	4	
New Apartment Building	43	units 781*
Total apartment Building	56	units 862*

\* Approximate

Development in the Acton Center area went forward on two fronts, mainly apartment buildings in the Great Road area and Heavy single residential build-up occurring closer to the Town Hall area. The first School of a proposed 2 Elementary School complex will open in 1971 on Taylor Road and the new Highway Building will be finished in May.

One interesting side note to the development of Acton Center is the change in character of the people living in the area. This can be recognized by the make-up of the Call Men that are assigned to the Center Station. In 1965, the Call Company was made up of men who spent most of their life in Acton and worked and lived in close proximity to the Fire Station. Our present compliment has only 3 men who were assigned to the company prior to 1965 and only live within  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile of the Fire Station.

### 3. Analysis of Alarms in the Town 1965, 1969, 1970: (see attached sheet #1)

Data Source: Fire Reports - Acton Fire Department.

The analysis of alarms is broken down by districts, Center, South and West. Figures shown are by location of the fire or emergency, in other words where the problem occurred.

- A. Still Alarms: Small problems, usually only requiring 1 piece of Apparatus. Figures shown do not include pumping cellars.
- B. Box Alarms: (other) These are alarms that require all station response and are transmitted for Brush, Auto, Rescue and Mutual Aid calls. Equipment responding varies with the type of call.
- C. Box Alarms: These are alarms that require all station response and are recieved and transmitted for Building Fires. These alarms have a response of 3 engines, 1 ladder and 1 Rescue truck.

### 4. Analysis of Alarms by Time of Day: (see attached sheet #2)

Data Source: Fire Reports - Acton Fire Department.

This analysis is divided into 2 sections, the time when the paid man are on duty 8AM to 4PM and the time when the stations were basically maned by Call Men 4PM to 8AM.

### 5. Average response time of apparatus: (see attached sheet #3)

Data Source: Radio Log Sheets - Acton Fire Department

This section reflects the time it takes the apparatus to respond after an alarm is sounded. It is the average time in tenths of minutes.

### 6. Average Men Responding: (see attached sheet #3)

Data Source: Payroll Records - Acton Fire Department.

This section shows the average men (Call-off duty paid) responding to an alarm on the 3 years surveyed.

See Attached Graphs

### Summary:

The growth in the Center District over the last 6 years speaks for itself. The heavy development of Multi-residential building concentrated in one area has caused us the greatest concern. If this type of building had not occurred the Fire Department easily could have handled the even above average single residential growth.

In looking over the analysis of Alarms the increase in calls in the Center rose rapidly over the last six years to a point where they are leading the other two districts.

## Summary Continued from Page 2

Not shown in the analysis is the ratio of Industrial and School runs that occur in South and West Acton, a factor that was present in 1905 and has continued. This would account for the somewhat consistent number of Box Alarms in these areas. Most Box Alarms in the Center District are for fires in residential buildings with the accompanying life hazard. Perhaps the most enlightening part of the survey was the section covering response time and manpower response. Both are critical and in the Center it has reached the point of being dangerous. The factor of response time can only be appreciated when it is put in to the proper prospective, that is, time of alarm, time to respond to the station and time to respond from the station to the fire. Converted into minutes, for an example on an average run to the Great Road area it would look something like this:

Time of Alarm	3:00 AM
Time Engine left Center	3:04.5 AM
Time Engine arrived at fire	3:08 AM
Elapsed Time	.08 Minutes

To figure the time elapsed from the receipt of the Alarm to arrival of the apparatus on the Fire Ground it is only necessary to add in the "running" time from the station to the fire. When the paid men are on duty the average response time is 30 seconds. According to National Standards, protection is impaired if it takes more than three minutes for a Fire Company to reach a fire.

In reviewing the manpower analysis, Center has dropped to an average turn out of 6.6 men per alarm after 4 PM. This station is required to send 1 engine and the tanker into the North Acton area. The engine requires a crew of 5 men and the tanker 2 men. Average response is not adequate to man this apparatus. The analysis figures are taken from the payroll figures which show the total of men that responded to the alarm. Roll call is taken when the trucks are back in quarters, so the response shown is mis-leading. Through past records we estimate that only 50% of the responding men are available when the apparatus leaves the station. In the case of the Center this would reduce the men available to 3.3, not even enough to man the engine. An average response time of 4.5 minutes coupled with a poor turn out and a 3 mile run to a serious fire in a three story apartment building, housing over 50 people, can only mean a serious problem.

The true assessment of Fire Protection in a town cannot be judged by how the Fire Department appears in a static state but must be based on actual performance. This Town has far out grown operating with a Call Department and basically after 4 PM. this is just what is happening.

A look at other towns in our area comparing in population will give a better idea as to where we should be.

Town	Population	No. of Stations	No. of Paid Men
Acton	14,770	3	16
Concord	16,118	2	29
Wayland	13,588	2	22
Bedford	13,513	1	18
Sudbury	13,700	3	25

Summary Continued from Page 2 & 3

The Town should be able to provide adequate manning by paid Fire Fighters to insure that apparatus initially responding to a building fire in any area of the town would be on the way within 30 seconds on the receipt of the alarm and be of the proper type of apparatus to handle the life hazard of the building involved. This we cannot presently do.

Our most immediate problem is the Center district, more to the point, the apartment houses in North Acton. To correct it will require cutting down the "response time" of the apparatus, cutting down the travel distance and providing better ladder service to the area.

#### 7. Methods considered to correct the problem:

At a meeting held in September 1970, with the Fire Chief, TBLAC and 2 members of the Board of Selectmen, the problem was identified and several methods of solving it were discussed. Some of these methods were as follows:

1. Building of 4th station in North Area.
2. Building 2 new stations, (headquarters at 111 & 27 substation in North Acton) and closing Center and South Acton.
3. Modifying Center Station to house the Ladder Truck.
4. Relocating the Center Station closer to the Rte.2A area.

After much discussion on the subject it was felt by all concerned that the following steps would be the best solution to the problem:

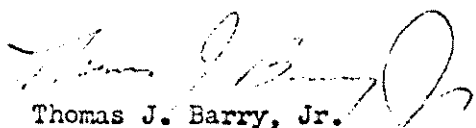
1. Add paid men to the Center Station.
2. Purchase a 2nd ladder truck for Acton Center and modify the building to house this truck.
3. Locate, purchase land and construct a new station nearer to Rte.2A and Rte.27 and make the existing Center Station available for other use.

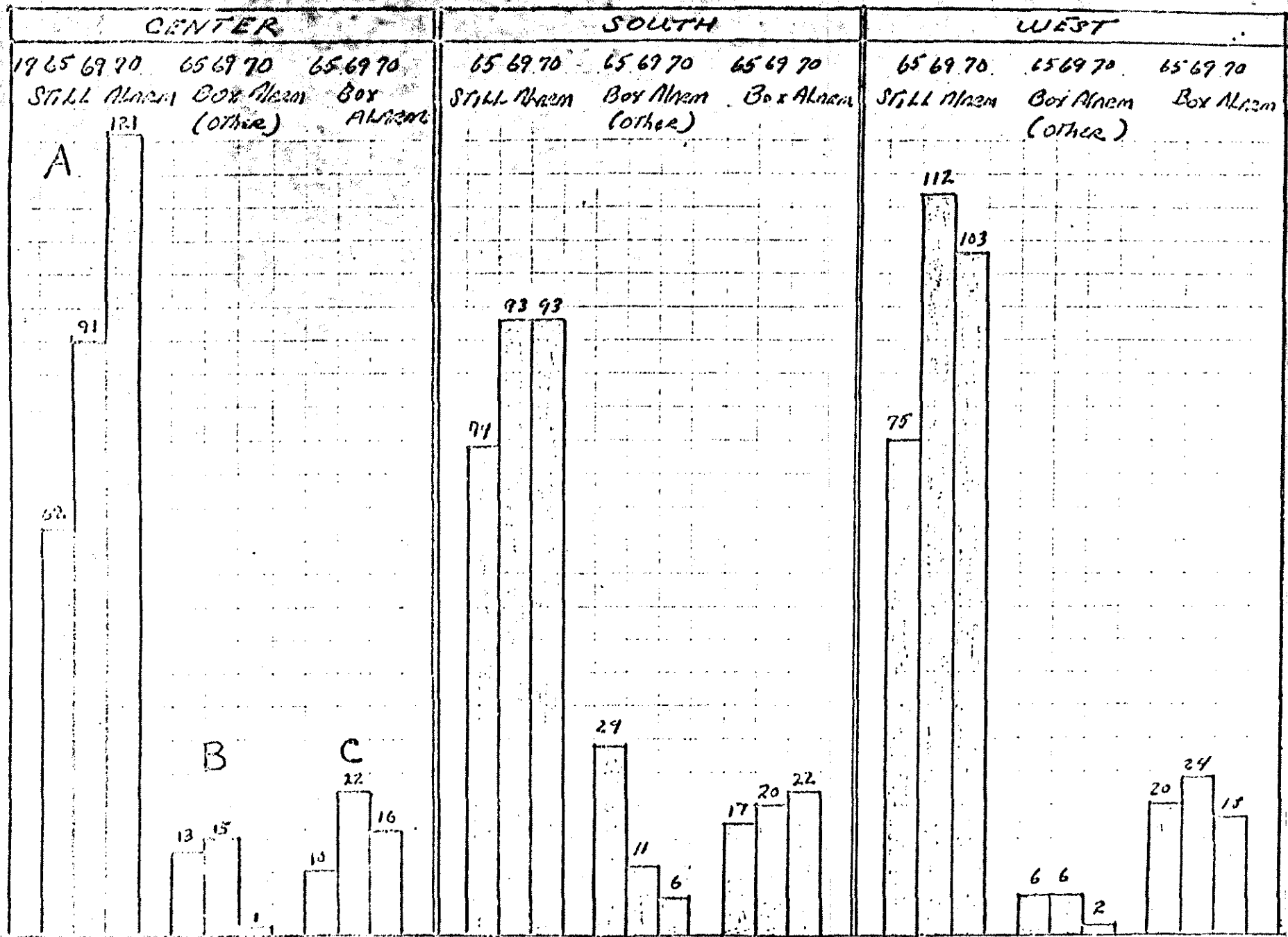
It was with this plan that the Fire Department proceeded. An additional 5 men were requested in 1971 to man the Center Station on a 24 hour basis. Plans were made to purchase and man a used Ladder Truck for this area in 1972. A search was made to determine the best location of the new station and a projected land purchase in 1973 with a station completion in 1975.

It was felt by this Department an operational station in this area by 1975 was not only an absolute necessity but could be easily accomplished within the time period. Needless to say phase one of the plan was not implemented and actually the entire plan was sent back for review, a review which is the basis of this report.

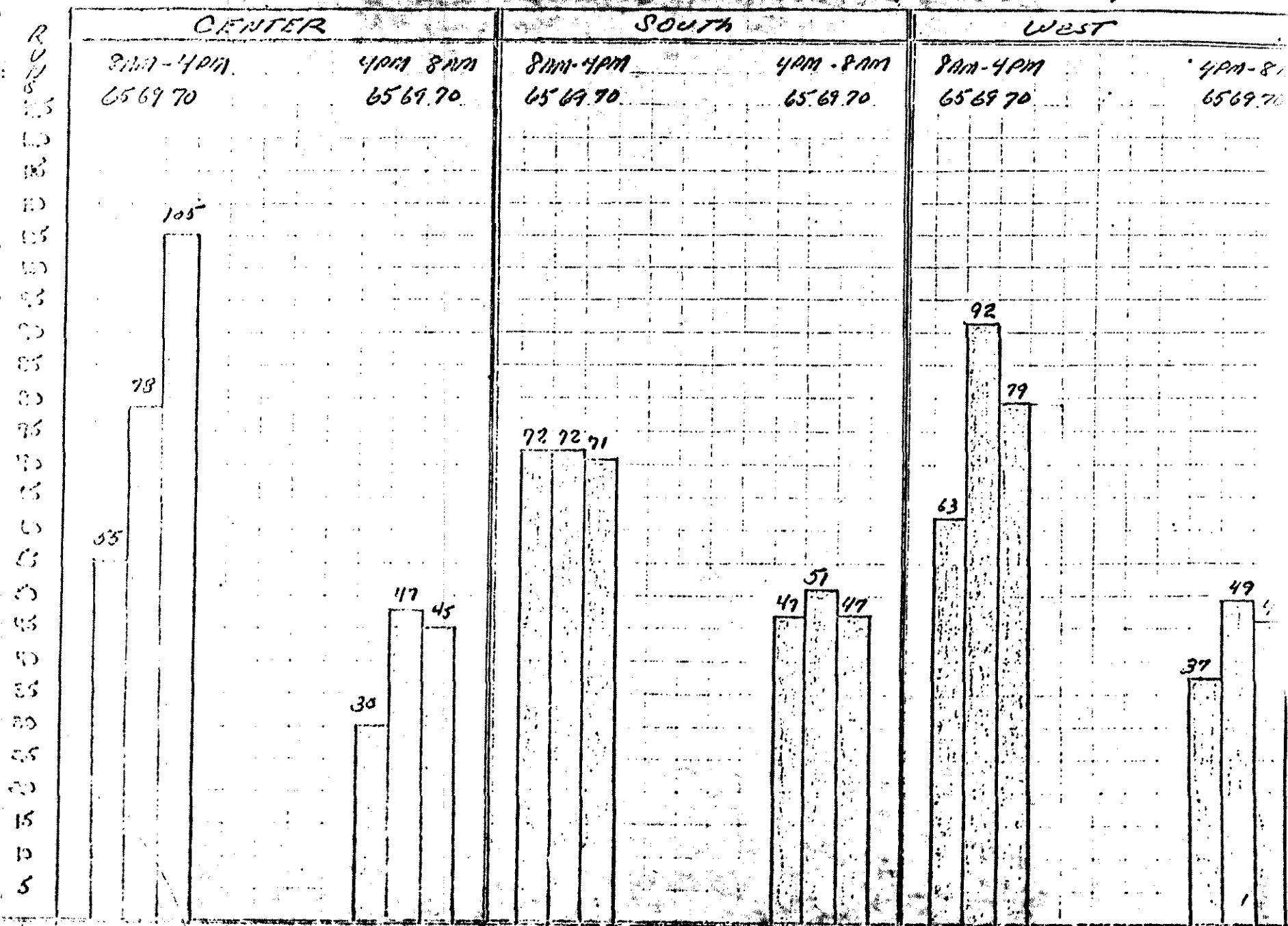
It does not take too much fore-sight to imagine the growth in this area that will occur between now and 1975. We cannot provide adequate protection to this area now and coupled with growth, which is still occurring in the other areas, we are going to find ourselves with serious problems on a broader scale.

The Fire Department is doing everything possible to prevent fire, plan and prepare for the Fire Protection in this Town. Plans can be submitted, reviewed and revised but until steps are taken towards implementation we are no closer to solving the problem than we were 9 months ago.

  
Thomas J. Barry, Jr.  
Chief of Fire Department



### ANALYSIS OF RUNS BY TIME OF DAY





ANALYSIS OF RESPONSE TIME & MANPOWER



TOWN BUILDING AND LAND ACQUISITION COMMITTEE MEETING

April 28, 1971

8:00 P.M.

Present: Joseph Stevens, Chairman  
Roger Huebsch  
Paul Hamilton  
David Abbt, Clerk

BRITT LAND: A memo was received from the Planning Board inviting this Committee to a meeting Monday, May 3 at 8:00 P.M. to discuss possible reasons for the Town to consider purchasing the "Britt Land" (or "Old Place Lot" Town Atlas Map B-5 Parcel 19 containing 33.60 acres). Joe Stevens said he could attend this meeting. A general discussion followed concerning the history of this land, its location next to the present Town Forest, the progress of the Planning Board's deliberations on the Preliminary Industrial Subdivision Plan submitted for this land, the "State Park" proposal as it relates to this land, and the general topography of this land.

SANITARY LAND FILL REUSE PLAN: An I.D.C. was received from Robert Dotson, Town Manager, conveying a request of the Board of Selectmen to study a proposal by Paul Nyquist to compile a plan for the use of the Sanitary Landfill area when it is completed. It was decided to have a field trip to this site Saturday, May 1st at 8:00 A.M. in preparation for further study and drafting of a report.

SWIMMING FACILITY: It was decided that Joseph Stevens will contact Janet Murphy, Chairman of the Recreation Commission concerning the possibility of getting a detailed report of their findings when test pits were dug on the "Cacciators Land" in West Acton.

TENNIS COURTS FOR ACTON CENTER: Roger Huebsch reported that Dr. Bridges was willing to sell a portion of his land on Taylor Road to the Town for tennis courts. Roger will check this out for the next meeting.

SPECIAL REPORT ON FIRE REQUIREMENTS: This report prepared by Thomas Barry, Jr., Fire Chief was received. It was decided to study this report in more detail and arrange a meeting with the Board of Selectmen to discuss the report. It was generally felt that the recommendation to;

1. Add paid men to the Center Station,
2. Purchase a second ladder truck for Acton Center and modify the building to house this truck,
3. Consider a future relocation of the Center Station closer to Route 2A,

should be supported by the Committee as the most practical method to increase protection in the Acton Center and Route 2A areas.

Meeting adjourned at 10:15 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,

*David Abbt*

David Abbt, Clerk

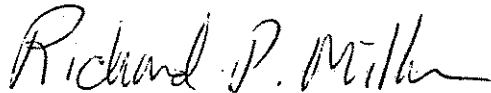
**TOWN OF ACTON**

**Inter-Departmental Communication**

DATE: October 16, 1979

FROM: TBLAC  
TO: Town Manager  
SUBJECT: FIRE STATION LOCATION STUDY

1. Following our several meetings with you and the Fire Chief, we recommend award of the Study to Charles M. Evans Associates, as the most responsive bidder within the funding appropriated.
2. Meanwhile, we will commence looking for suitable sites in the area of Route 27 North and Route 2A, principally West of Route 27.
3. Please advise when Evans will commence and what specific interface you expect TBLAC to make with Evans.



Richmond P. Miller, Chairman

Copies:

Fire Chief MacGregor, HQ, Central Street  
Michael Rosenbaum, 18E Strawberry Hill Road  
Richard Calandrella, 16 Notre Dame Road  
—David Abbt, 36 Piper Road

## TOWN BUILDING-AND ACQUISITION COMMITTEE

## INFORMATION SHEET

## I Present area use:

- 1) Location or locations of present facilities 256 Central Street  
7 Concord Road 54 School Street
- 2) Square footage of enclosed space 5,940
- 3) Clear height of enclosed space 1st floor 14' 2nd floor 9'
- 4) Type of building construction ( i.e. wood, block, etc. )  
Block and Brick
- 5) Office area 170 sq. ft.
- 6) What portion of above space is heated? Oil
- 7) Square footage of outdoor storage space \_\_\_\_\_
- 8) Surfacing of outdoor space \_\_\_\_\_
- 9) Equipment used: please list equipment which you would classify as major items. Include any office equipment. Attach separate list if convenient.  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- 10) Special storage facilities \_\_\_\_\_
- 11) Maintenance facilities \_\_\_\_\_
- 12) Is present location well suited to serve the needs of the whole town?  
yes
- 13) How many employees? - Male? 10
- 14) " " " - Female? 1
- 15) Is present facility Town owned or rented? Town Owned

Fire Dept

# II Estimated future area and building needs:

Action population 1966 - approximately 11,000  
 " " 1971 - estimated 14,000  
 " " 1976 - " 17,000

- 1) Square footage of enclosed space 4,500 sq. ft.
- 2) Clear height of enclosed space 14'
- 3) Recommended type of building construction ( i.e. wood, block )

Block and Brick

- 4) Office area 170 sq. ft.
- 5) What portions of above space should be heated? all

- 6) Square footage of outdoor storage space
- 7) Recommended surfacing of outdoor space Front 4,500 sq. ft.
- 8) Recommended location or locations of future

Vicinity of Harris St. and Main Street

- 9) Recommended equipment: list only equipment which you would classify as major items. Include office equipment. Attach separate list if convenient.

One 1,00 gal. pumper

One Forrest Fire Truck

- 10) Special storage requirements

- 11) Special Maintenance facilities

- 12) Number of employees - Male? 9

- 13) " " " - Female?

## III Additional comments: Enclosed map shows correct placing of fire stations in this

Town according to the Fire Underwriters. Both the Town Engineers and myself have

proposed this land taking several times to a Board of Selectmen and have had no action.